

many occasions to talk about the most important quality-of-life issue for seniors in my State and around the country, and that is the issue of prescription drugs and the high costs that they are having to pay. Not only do we know that seniors who have no insurance are paying twice as much as others when they go to the drug store and get their medications, but we have a health care system that has been in place now for 35 years, a very successful health care system called Medicare that simply needs to be modernized to cover prescription drugs so that our seniors can continue to get the promise of health care that we made to them 35 years ago.

I have been asking people in my district and around the State of Michigan to write letters that I will share on the floor of the House of Representatives. Once again this evening, I wish to do that, to read a letter from Annabelle Lewis from Hillsdale, Michigan, who writes about her own struggles to pay for her prescriptions.

She says:

I stopped taking the Provachol 20 milligrams for high cholesterol in January 1999, having previously cut pills in half. In December 1999, a year later, my cholesterol was 339. Having received some free samples, my cholesterol came down to 198. Presently this medication is \$122.99 per month, not including \$30.58 for Estrogen replacement. Medicare part B deductible this month has reduced my Social Security to \$505. This covers house expenses with little left over. Having this medication available certainly would be less expensive than a nursing home should I have a stroke. I am able to continue working as a nurse but I find it very difficult due to my depressed state. I hope this information is useful and you will be blessed in your efforts.

Sincerely, thank you, Annabelle Lewis.

Under the plan that I am supporting for Medicare coverage, a voluntary, optional, comprehensive Medicare benefit we would add to Medicare, Annabelle Lewis would be saving \$438, important dollars, the difference between eating breakfast, lunch or dinner, paying the utility bill, having the quality of life that I am sure as a nurse she has worked hard all these years to acquire and now finds herself having to struggle with issues of cholesterol, whether or not she will be healthy or have a stroke.

Seniors in our country deserve better. I know right now with all the confusion and all the numbers and all the private plans and proposals that are out there, the real bottom line that all of this is about is the fact that the prescription drug companies do not want the 39 million seniors of this country to be organized under Medicare and have the clout to get a reduced price, just like anybody else in any other insurance plan. Coming together they would have the combined clout to get a group discount of great magnitude. That is the real fight about Medicare. That is the fight we are in right now. Do we just simply modernize Medicare, or do we set up some complicated system with insurance companies that say

they do not want to cover prescription drugs? And they do not intend to cover prescription drugs, saying instead it is a hollow promise to go that direction.

I would urge, Mr. Speaker, that this House come together and recognize and celebrate Medicare, which is a 35-year success story for our country, 35 years of health care for seniors, for the disabled in this country, that only does not work now because we do not cover the new way that health care has provided today, which is simply prescription drugs. If we simply modernize Medicare, we will be able to continue to keep the promise.

It seems to me in these great economic times, we have two important challenges: we need to pay our bills and we need to keep our promises. The promise of Medicare is something that our seniors are counting on. We need to pass a comprehensive, voluntary prescription drug plan now.

CALLING ON CONGRESS TO STRIKE LANGUAGE IN TRADE BILL IN REGARD TO SUDAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I am appalled and outraged that language was included in a recent bill that unanimously passed the House that will lift the embargo on gum arabic from Sudan.

Language was included in H.R. 4868, the Miscellaneous Trade and Corrections Act of 2000, which does not even mention the word or country of Sudan or gum arabic. Yet the passing of this language is a significant foreign policy issue for the U.S. The language was known about by very few Members of the House. This is very cryptic language that was used to describe a major foreign policy issue for the U.S., whether to lift significant sanctions against one of the worst regimes in the world.

The regime in Khartoum harbors gobs of terrorists. Abu Nidal, Hamas, and all of the terrorists who are doing so much to disrupt the Middle East have training camps in Sudan. Virtually every major terrorist group in the world passes through Khartoum, many under the tutelage and sponsorship of the government of Sudan. The government of Sudan was implicated and behind the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The government of Sudan condones slavery. Slavery exists in the 21st century. Yet the Congress voted to help a country that has slavery. Over 2 million people have died because of the war conducted and generated by the northern-led government.

The government of Sudan indiscriminately and repeatedly bombs and kills innocent civilians. They are killing hundreds of Catholics in Bishop Max Gassisi' diocese in the Nuba Mountains. Just over the past few weeks, the Suda-

nese regime has shut down a U.N. humanitarian relief Operation Lifeline Sudan that feeds millions of people in southern Sudan, by repeatedly bombing and attacking and killing workers and planes.

Chinese troops are now supposedly present in Sudan, most likely guarding the precious oil fields that are now generating hard cash for the government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, every Member should know that we have just learned that Osama bin Laden, a terrorist who killed American citizens and bombed two of our embassies, one of the most wanted international terrorists, is reportedly a major investor in Gum Arabic Company Limited. This company is a Khartoum-based firm that has a virtual monopoly over this issue. The new book out called *The New Jackals* by Simon Reeve says the following:

Perhaps most crucially, bin Laden cannily invested in Gum Arabic Company Limited, a Khartoum-based firm which has a virtual monopoly over most of Sudan's exports of gum arabic, which in turn comprises about 80 percent of the world's supply. Gum arabic comes from the sap of the Sudanese acacia tree, a colorless, tasteless gum that makes newspaper ink stick to printing presses, keeps ingredients in drinks from settling at the bottom of a can, and forms a film around sweets and medical pills, keeping them fresh. It is a crucial ingredient in dozens of western products.

Then he goes on to say that bin Laden is believed to have secured an effective monopoly over the entire Sudanese output that this Congress has voted to help.

Even now the State Department in Washington and analysts at the CIA remain unsure whether bin Laden is still profiting from his investment. Thirty percent of the shares in Gum Arabic Company Limited are held by the Sudanese government, who tried to assassinate Mubarak who did not support American troops in Desert Storm and Desert Shield.

Then he goes on to say and end that it is still possible that every time someone buys an American soft drink, they are helping fill Osama bin Laden's coffers, his coffers whereby he can go out and kill American men and women and children. I have a description of Osama bin Laden as described by the Anti-Defamation League which I will include for the RECORD.

Gum arabic is an important Sudanese primary export. The administration has prohibited and put it on a list of sanctions, a comprehensive list of sanctions against the government of Sudan. The executive order was issued as a direct consequence of the Sudanese regime's sponsorship of international terrorism, its effort to destabilize neighboring countries, and its abysmal human rights record, including the denial of religious freedom.

Mr. Speaker, why would the Congress, why would the House pass a bill without telling anyone what was in the bill and every Member that voted for that bill did this and did not know to